



## PATRICK TESTIN STATE SENATOR

### *Op-Ed: Seizing Opportunity*

A few months ago, Billy Joel fans filled Lambeau Field to hear the piano man play a nearly three hour long concert. Among the hits Joel played was "Allentown", a somber tune that details the hopelessness felt by many in the 1970s and 1980s when globalization caused manufacturers in Midwestern states to close their doors, board up their windows, and move overseas. Many in Central and Western Wisconsin felt the sting of that shift, and some are still feeling the effects decades later – but the situation is starting to change. This week I voted for the Foxconn legislative package that will help bring thousands of family supporting manufacturing jobs back to Wisconsin where they belong.

The Foxconn package is the largest deal of its kind in Wisconsin history. For that reason, I took my time, asked questions, and studied its details. Foxconn, a company that manufactures high-tech electronics, plans to invest \$10 billion in Wisconsin in the next six years, building a manufacturing facility that will equal the size of Junction City once it's completed. They will have the capacity to hire up to 13,000 workers, with an average salary of \$53,875 plus benefits. That means the company's payroll will be \$700 million per year. Of course, it's going to take a lot of construction workers to build a plant that size – 10,000, to be exact. This deal has the capacity to directly impact 23,000 families – and indirectly benefit thousands more.

That's because this deal's impact isn't limited to Southeastern Wisconsin. It's good for us in Central and Western Wisconsin too. I talked to leaders in the construction industry, the workforce development community, and the UW System. They all see this deal bringing increased opportunity to people in our region. A technology manufacturing company like Foxconn needs other businesses to supply components – estimates indicates they would need 150 different suppliers. The direct impact on businesses across the state contracting with Foxconn could be as high as \$1.4 billion per year.

Of course, no deal is entirely one sided. Wisconsin is offering Foxconn a package of tax credits that will total between \$200-\$250 million per year over the next fifteen years. But this is no blank check. These incentives are tied to Foxconn reaching actual goals for job creation and capital investment in the state. Additionally, there are claw back provisions in the bill that would require Foxconn to pay back tax credits if they can't fulfill their promises. This deal isn't a gamble. We've worked to protect taxpayers at every step of this process.

This has the potential to be a watershed moment for our state. After decades of seeing American manufacturers move overseas, the time and economic conditions are right for us to bring jobs back to our shores. Foxconn chose to make a multi-billion dollar investment in Wisconsin instead of in Michigan, Indiana, or any of the other states who sought to attract them. It's our time now. Wisconsin won because we seized this opportunity – and that means new opportunities for thousands of middle class families across the state.